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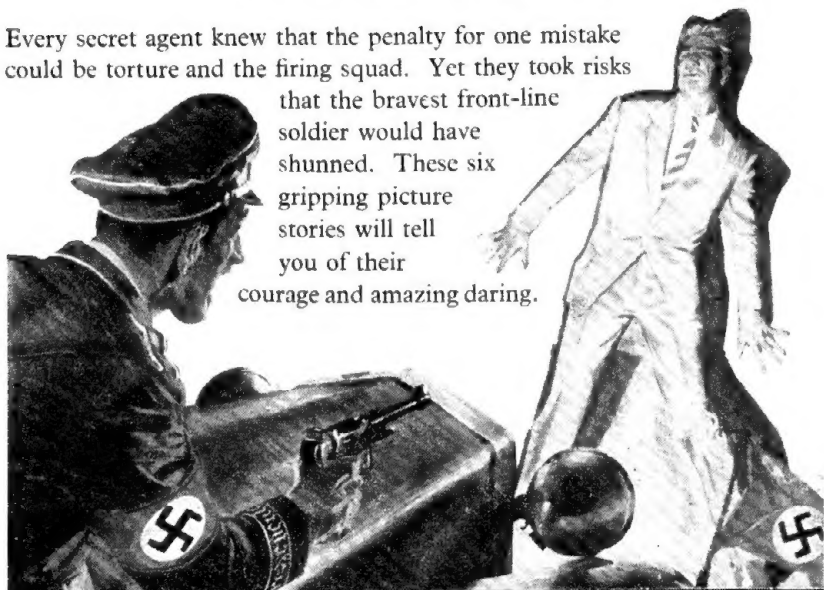
FIRE 1A



THE BANDIT

SIX TALES OF NERVE-TINGLING TENSION

Every secret agent knew that the penalty for one mistake could be torture and the firing squad. Yet they took risks that the bravest front-line soldier would have shunned. These six gripping picture stories will tell you of their courage and amazing daring.



SECRET AGENT
PICTURE LIBRARY HOLIDAY SPECIAL

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THE BANDIT

IN THE OBSCURE CENTRAL AMERICAN STATE
OF SANTAGA, REVOLUTION AND BANDITRY
WERE PART OF THE ACCEPTED ORDER OF THINGS.



AND OF ALL THE BANDITS, EL CONCHO WAS THE MOST FEARED OR REVERED, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF ONE'S PURSE...

DO NOTHING
FOOLISH, I BEG
OF YOU - IT WOULD
GIVE ME MUCH PAIN
TO ORDER MY MEN
TO SHOOT!

IT IS EL
CONCHO! THROW
DOWN YOUR GUNS,
AMIGOS - WITH
HIM WE DO NOT
ARGUE!



WE CARRY
NO MONEY, CONCHO -
ONLY SUPPLIES FOR EL
JACINTO SILVER
MINE.

BUT THAT IS
EXCELLENT, AMIGO -
WE HAVE BUSINESS
THERE OURSELVES AND WILL
ESCORT YOU. VADOS,
COMANEROS - BRING
THE HORSES!



AT THE BRITISH-OWNED EL JACINTO SILVER MINE, MANAGER RICK FRANCIS FACED A DAY OF INCREASING PROBLEMS...



RICK BURST ANGRILY INTO THE MENS' BUNK-HOUSE...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE SUPPLY TRAIN ENTERED THE MINE COMPOUND.



BUT RICK SOON DISCOVERED THAT ALL WAS FAR FROM WELL.



THE BANDIT QUICKLY PROVIDED ANSWERS TO THE MANY QUESTIONS THAT HAD BEEN PLAGUING RICK SINCE EARLY MORNING...

YOUR MEN HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO JOIN THE REVOLUTION, LED BY EL COLONELO MENDOZA. YOU, ALSO, ARE REQUIRED TO JOIN.

OH, YES? AND EXACTLY WHAT PART AM I SCHEDULED TO PLAY?



YOU ARE AN EXPLOSIVES EXPERT? SO THERE IS A BRIDGE THAT MUST BE BLOWN - PRECISELY, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND, AT THE MOMENT WHEN IT IS BEING CROSSED BY OUR SO HATED PRESIDENTE, GENERALE RAFFAELLO!

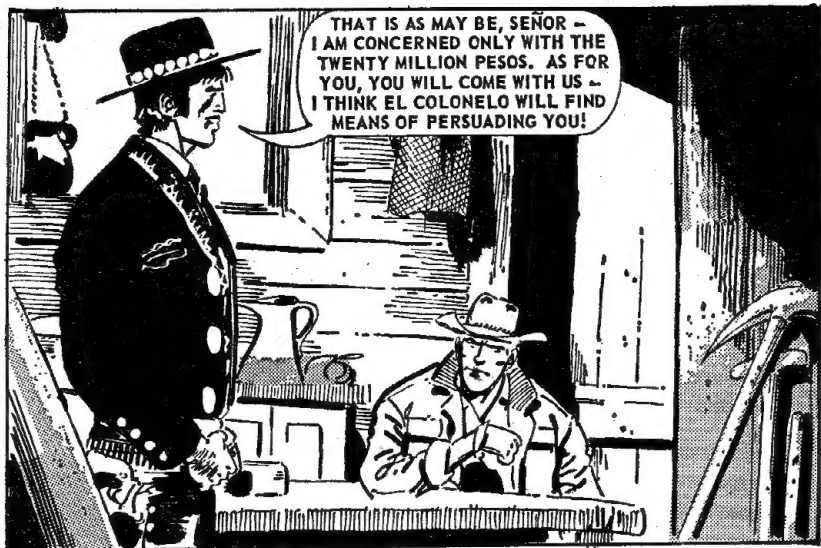
RAFFAELLO - HE AND HIS GANG HAVE BEEN ROBBING THIS COUNTRY FOR YEARS! BUT SINCE WHEN DID YOU BECOME A PATRIOT, BANDIDO?



THE GENERALE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY TWENTY MILLION PESOS IN GOLD! THAT IS TO BE MY FEE FOR HELPING EL COLONELO TO WIN THIS REVOLUTION!

I MIGHT'VE KNOWN! WELL, COUNT ME OUT - I WANT NO PART OF IT! FAR AS I CAN SEE, IT'S SIMPLY A MATTER OF REPLACING ONE CROOK BY ANOTHER!





THE BANDIT LEADER TOOK IT SURPRISINGLY CALMLY...

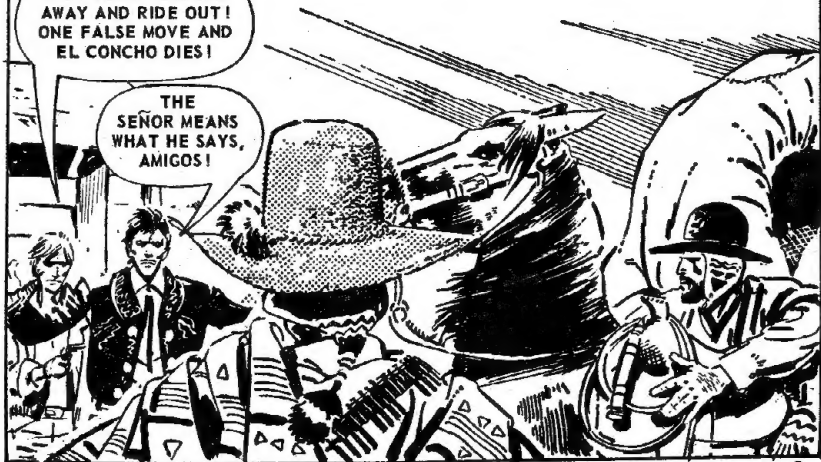
WELL DONE, AMIGO -
I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE A MAN
TO BE RECKONED WITH!

YOU'D
BETTER
BELIEVE IT!
NOW, OUTSIDE -
YOU'RE GOING TO
ORDER YOUR CUT-
THROATS TO LEAVE
WITHOUT MY SUPPLY
WAGONS. AND I'M
HOLDING YOU UNTIL
THEY'RE LONG
GONE!

RICK SEEMED TO HAVE EVERYTHING COMFORTABLY UNDER CONTROL...

PUT YOUR WEAPONS
AWAY AND RIDE OUT!
ONE FALSE MOVE AND
EL CONCHITO DIES!

THE
SEÑOR MEANS
WHAT HE SAYS,
AMIGOS!



EL CONCHO'S APPARENT ACCEPTANCE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES MADE RICK DROP HIS GUARD - AND ONE OF THE BANDIT'S FOLLOWERS SNATCHED A WHIP FROM HIS BELT ...



THE BANDIT LEADER MOVED LIKE A STRIKING SNAKE ...



FURTHER RESISTANCE WAS FUTILE...

WE HAVE
WASTED ENOUGH
TIME! BRING
HIM A HORSE -
PRONTO!



FOR SEVERAL HOURS, THEY FOLLOWED
A ROUGH TRAIL THROUGH THE
MOUNTAINS, UNTIL...

THERE,
AMIGO, IS OUR
DESTINATION...

SANT' IGNACIO,
THE VILLAGE MOST
OF MY MEN COME
FROM. IT MUST BE
EL COLONELO'S
H.Q. NOW...



BUT RICK WAS WRONG ...

VIVA,
EL CONCHO!
VIVA! VIVA!

TO THE SQUARE,
AMIGOS! I BRING
YOU FOOD IN PLENTY,
BLANKETS, MILK FOR THE
CHILDREN, A LITTLE
TOBACCO FOR THE OLD
MEN, PERHAPS!



RICK BECAME MORE AND MORE PUZZLED AS THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUPPLIES WENT ON.

BUT -
BUT I DO NOT
UNDERSTAND ...

WITH ALL THE
ABLE-BODIED MEN
TAKEN FOR THE REVOLUTION,
HOW WOULD THESE PEOPLE
LIVE, EXCEPT BY WHAT
I CAN STEAL?



WITH TWENTY MILLION PESOS ABOUT
TO FALL INTO YOUR LAP, I GUESS
YOU CAN AFFORD TO BE GENEROUS ...

YOU ARE A
GRINGO, SEÑOR - A
FOREIGNER! I DO NOT
EXPECT THAT YOU WILL
UNDERSTAND.



THE PEOPLE
THANK YOU, EL
CONCHO. ONCE
AGAIN, YOU HAVE
SAVED US FROM
STARVATION.

THANK SEÑOR RICARDO,
PADRE, FOR THE
FOOD WAS HIS, UNTIL
WE 'BORROWED' IT!
SEND THE WAGONS
BACK TO WHERE
THEY CAME FROM -
THEY ARE OF NO
USE TO US!



EL CONCHO'S BAND LEFT THE VILLAGE TO AN ADULATION THAT WAS CLOSE TO WORSHIP...

IF THIS IS A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE ORDINARY PEOPLE THINK OF HIM, HE MUST BE THE MOST POPULAR MAN IN THE COUNTRY!

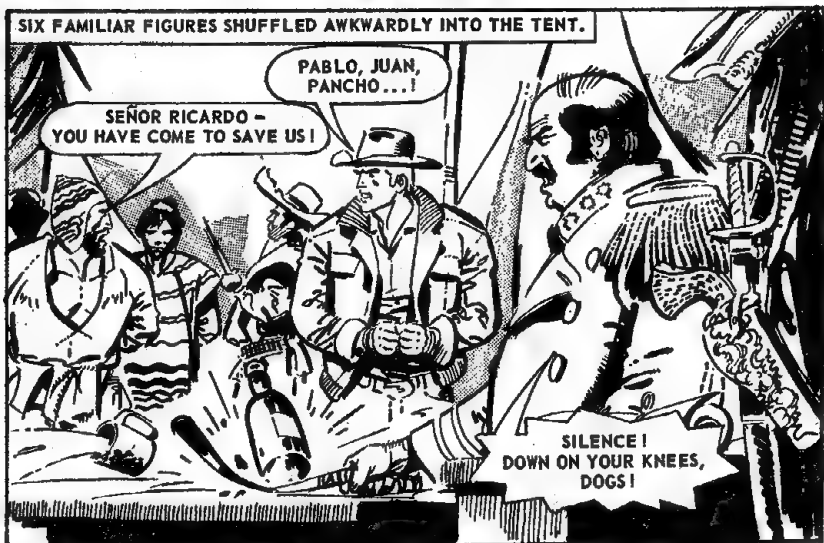
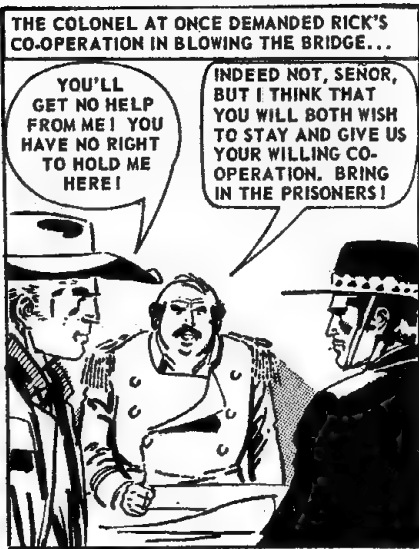
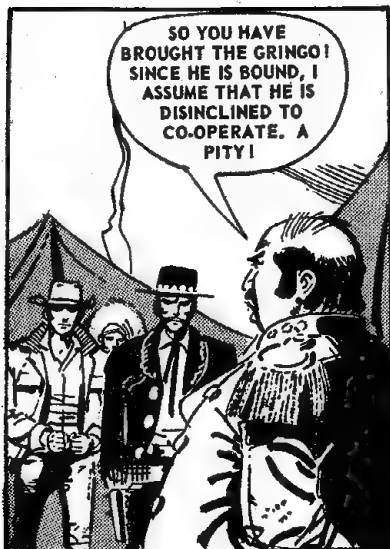
OLÉ, EL CONCHO!
VIVA, VIVA!

GRACIAS,
GRACIAS!

THE BANDITS RODE BY SECRET TRAILS DEEP INTO THE HILLS UNTIL, JUST BEFORE NIGHTFALL, THEY REACHED THE CAMP OF COLONEL MENDOZA...

EL COLONEL AWAITS US, AMIGO. I WARN YOU — HE IS AS TREACHEROUS AND VICIOUS AS A RATTLESNAKE!

IF HE'S YOUR IDEA OF A PRESIDENT, IT'S YOUR AFFAIR! DON'T EXPECT ME TO COLLABORATE. ...THAT'S ALL.





ONCE OUTSIDE, RICK ROUNDED ON EL CONCHO ANGRILY...

THANKS -
YOU WERE A GREAT
HELP! TO SUPPORT
AN ANIMAL LIKE THAT
IS TO BE AS BAD
AS HE IS!

I HAD AS LITTLE CHOICE AS
YOURSELF. HAD I NOT
BROUGHT YOU HERE, YOUR
MEN WOULD HAVE DIED ANY-
WAY. WHAT I DID WAS IN
THEIR BEST INTERESTS, AS
ALSO IS THIS MATTER OF THE
BRIDGE! TO THAT EXTENT
ONLY, DO I SUPPORT EL
COLONEL!

LATER, RICK AND EL CONCHO TALKED FAR INTO THE NIGHT...

I WANT THAT YOU SHOULD
UNDERSTAND, RICARDO! I NEED
EL COLONEL BECAUSE WE ARE
NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DESTROY
THE BRIDGE BY OURSELVES.

AND HE NEEDS
YOU BECAUSE OF
YOUR POPULARITY WITH
THE PEOPLE.
YES, IT BEGINS TO
MAKE SOME SORT
OF SENSE NOW.



NEXT MORNING, THEY BROKE CAMP SOON AFTER DAWN...



EL COLONELO AND HIS MEN WERE ALREADY ON THE MOVE.

BUENOS DIAS.
I TRUST THE SEÑOR
SLEPT WELL
AND IS READY FOR
THE OPERATION?

AS READY
AS I'LL EVER BE --
LET'S GO!



THE RIDE THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS WAS LONG AND HARD AND THE SUN WAS HIGH IN THE SKY BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE AMBUSH AREA.

TAKE UP YOUR
POSITIONS ON EITHER
SIDE OF THE ROAD
AND REMAIN HIDDEN AND
COMPLETELY QUIET UNTIL
THE WORD IS GIVEN!

COME, RICARDO, I
WILL TAKE YOU TO WHERE
YOU CAN SEE THE BRIDGE
AND DECIDE HOW BEST
TO SET YOUR CHARGES!



THE BRIDGE WAS A FORMIDABLE TASK FOR ONE MAN TO TACKLE.

THE GENERAL'S CONVOY WILL BE MADE UP AS FOLLOWS - TWO TROOP CARRIERS, THEN THE ARMOURD TRUCK CONTAINING THE MONEY, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER TROOP CARRIER AND THE GENERAL'S CAR.

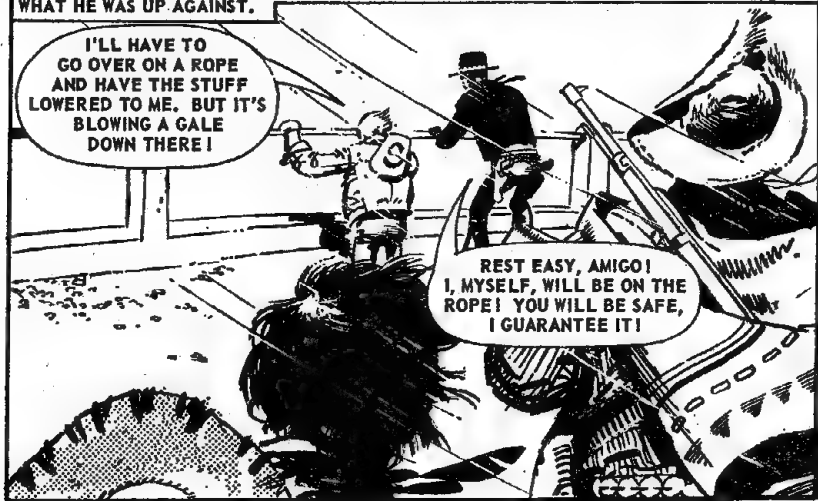
AND I'M TO LET THE MONEY ACROSS AND STILL BLOW THE BRIDGE WITH THE GENERAL ON IT! I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE CENTRE RIGHT OUT - AND THAT WON'T BE EASY!



BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THEY WERE ON THE BRIDGE THAT RICK FULLY APPRECIATED WHAT HE WAS UP AGAINST.

I'LL HAVE TO GO OVER ON A ROPE AND HAVE THE STUFF LOWERED TO ME. BUT IT'S BLOWING A GALE DOWN THERE!

REST EASY, AMIGO! I, MYSELF, WILL BE ON THE ROPE! YOU WILL BE SAFE, I GUARANTEE IT!



THE WIND HOWLED ALL AROUND RICK, FORCING HIM TO HANG ON LIKE GRIM DEATH TO THE ROPE. AT LAST, HE FOUND A FIRM FOOTHOLD...

OKAY,
LOWER THE
EXPLOSIVE...



ONCE UNDER THE BRIDGE, THE CLOSELY-LATTICED GIRDERS SHELTERED HIM...

IT'S A
MIGHTY LONG
WAY DOWN!
ONE SLIP AND
I'VE HAD
IT!

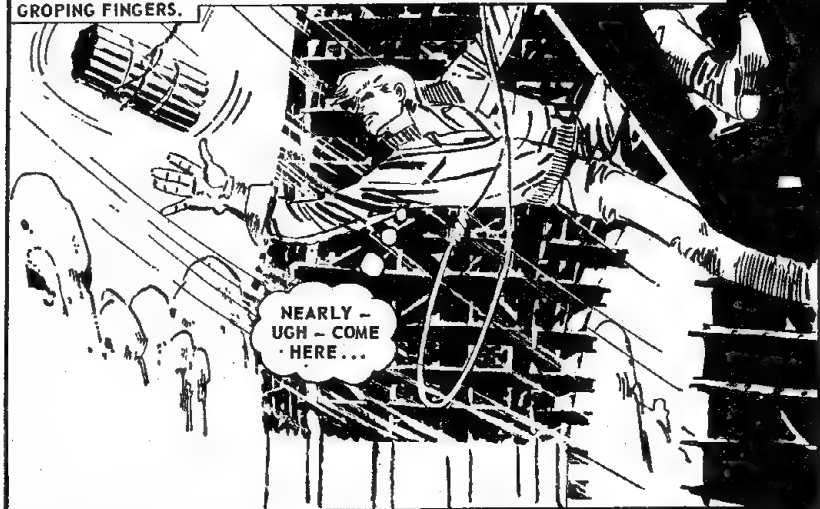


IT WAS SLOW, MUSCLE-TEARING WORK, BUT AT LAST...

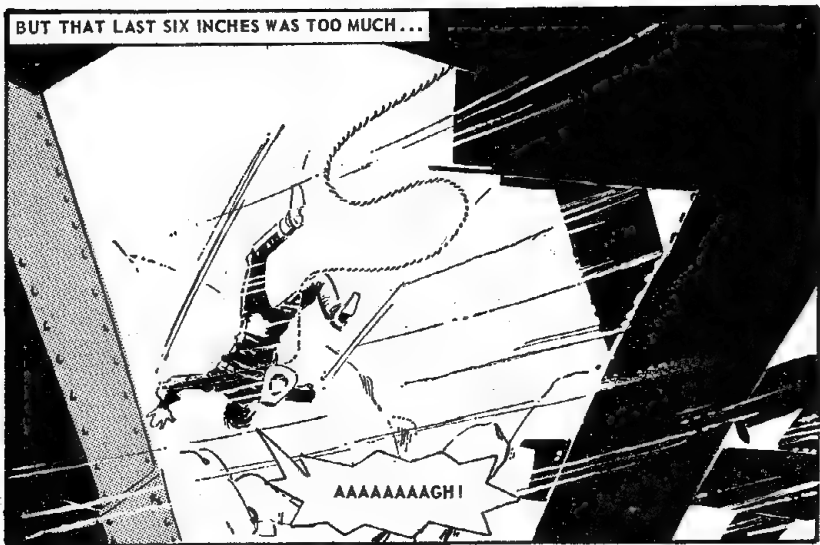
ONE MORE
OUGHT TO DO
IT! I SHAN'T
BE SORRY
TO GET BACK
'UPSTAIRS'
AGAIN!



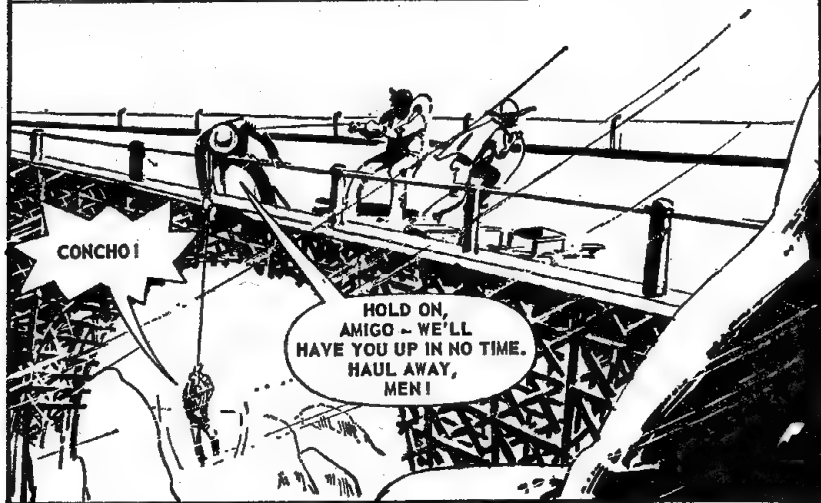
THE PACKAGE OF EXPLOSIVE WAS SWUNG BY THE WIND SIX INCHES BEYOND HIS GROPING FINGERS.



BUT THAT LAST SIX INCHES WAS TOO MUCH...



FORTUNATELY, EL CONCHO LIVED UP TO HIS PROMISE.



SLOWLY, RICK WAS HAULED TO SAFETY...

HA,
AMIGO - YOU
ARE SAFE
NOW!

THANKS,
PAL - THAT'S ONE I
OWE YOU!

CONCHO -
LOOK!



IT IS THE CONVOY OF EL GENERALE!
RICARDO, HAVE SUFFICIENT CHARGES
BEEN SET?

WE'LL JUST
HAVE TO HOPE
SO! GRAB ALL
THAT LOOSE
GEAR AND LET'S
GET OFF THE
BRIDGE!



THE BANDITS NEEDED NO URGING...



TENSION WAS AT BREAKING POINT AS THE FIRST VEHICLE OF THE CONVOY ROLLED ON TO THE BRIDGE.

THEY'RE
STILL MOVING
SO THEY
CAN'T SUSPECT
ANYTHING...



IT SEEMED AN AGE BEFORE THE LEADING VEHICLES HAD CLEARED THE BRIDGE, BUT THEN...

NOW, NOW!



A GREAT BLOTCH OF SMOKE AND FLAME ENVELOPED THE CENTRE OF THE BRIDGE -
JUST AS GENERAL RAFFAELLO'S CAR REACHED IT...



EVERYTHING HAD GONE EXACTLY TO PLAN, BUT PHASE TWO OF THE OPERATION HAD YET TO BEGIN...

OPEN FIRE!

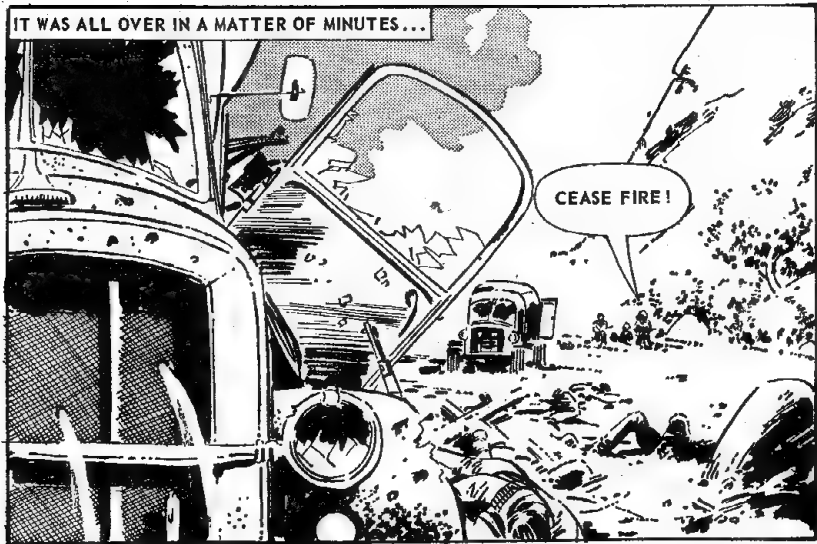


THE ROAD WAS IMMEDIATELY SWEEPED BY A TORNADO OF BULLETS FROM EITHER SIDE.

AAAAAAAGH!



IT WAS ALL OVER IN A MATTER OF MINUTES...



RICK WAS MORE THAN A LITTLE SICKENED BY THE NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER, BUT THE GAME HAD NOT YET BEEN PLAYED OUT...

WELL, CONCHO, YOU HAVE EARNED YOUR PRIZE - GO AND CLAIM IT!

MUCHAS GRACIAS, MI COLONELO! COME, AMIGOS - LET US GO AND SEE WHAT TWENTY MILLION PESOS LOOK LIKE!



AND THEN THE ENGLISHMAN OVERHEARD EL COLONELO AND ONE OF HIS AIDES...

THE MOMENT THE FOOLS ARE AROUND THE BULLION VAN, OPEN FIRE - AND SHOOT TO KILL! I WILL DEAL WITH THE GRINGO PERSONALLY!

SI, MI COLONELO!

THE MURDEROUS, DOUBLE-CROSSING SWINE!



RICK'S IMMEDIATE THOUGHT WAS TO WARN THE BANDIT LEADER...



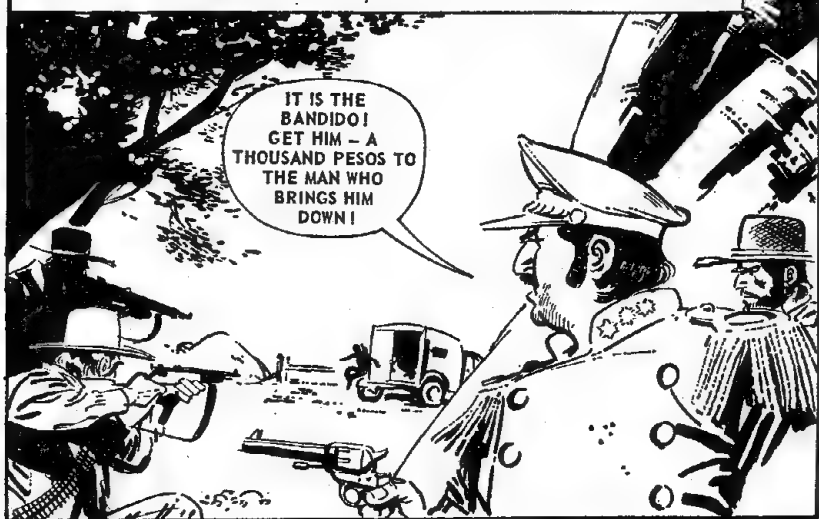
IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE TO SCATTER, FOR THE COLONEL'S MEN OPENED FIRE AT THAT MOMENT...



SOMEHOW, RICK AND A FEW OTHERS MANAGED TO GET INTO THE BULLION-VAN UNSCATHED.



AND BEFORE ANYONE COULD PROTEST, EL CONCHO JUMPED OUT OF THE VAN...



THE MOMENT HIS FEET TOUCHED THE GROUND, THE LITHE BANDIT LEADER DIVED BENEATH THE TRUCK...





BUT, IN SPITE OF THE COLONEL'S FURY,
EL CONCHO REACHED HIS OBJECTIVE.
THE DOOR IS OPEN - GRACIAS A DIOS!
NOW I CAN USE IT AS A SHIELD TO GET
INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT.



SUDDENLY, THE BULLION VAN WAS ON THE MOVE, GAINING SPEED QUICKLY DOWN THE INCLINE.

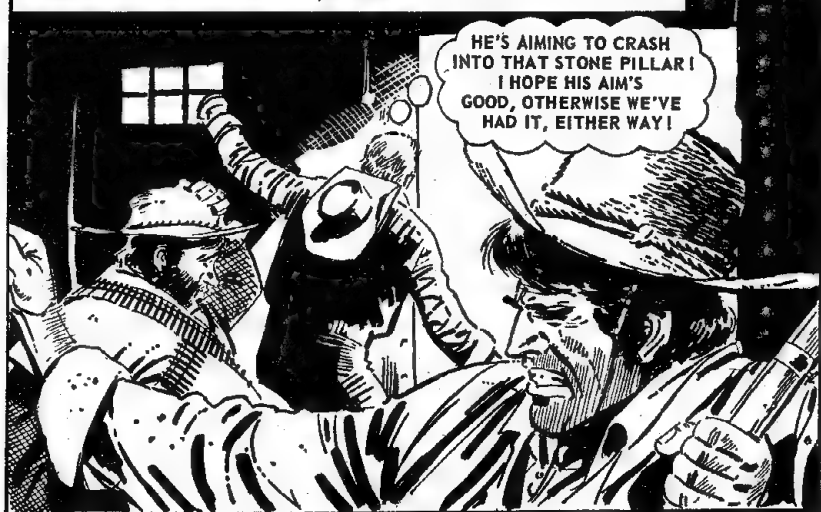
HE IS
BACKING
STRAIGHT TOWARDS
THE BRIDGE! IS
HE MAD? HE WILL KILL
US ALL!

CONCHO
KNOWS WHAT
HE'S DOING! KEEP
FIRING AND LEAVE
THE REST TO
HIM!

THE COLONEL'S FURY ROSE TO NEW HEIGHTS AT THE FAILURE OF HIS AMBUSH...

AFTER THEM!
THEY MUST NOT
ESCAPE!

AS THE VAN NEARED THE BRIDGE, CONCHO'S INTENTIONS BECAME CLEAR.



THE VAN HIT THE STONE PILLAR AND STOPPED DEAD...



AS THEY JUMPED FROM THE VAN, THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RAVINE ADDED THEIR FIRE TO THAT OF THE COLONEL'S MEN.



BUT TWO MEN COULD NOT HOLD BACK THE RELENTLESS ADVANCE OF THE COLONEL'S MEN.





BUT BEFORE ANY SHOTS COULD BE FIRED, EL CONCHO AND RICK WERE BEING BORNE DOWNSTREAM IN THE SWIFT-FLOWING CURRENT.



FURIOUS FIRE FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE RAVINE GREETED RICK AND EL CONCHO THE MOMENT THEY SURFACED...

THE COLONEL'S ENLISTED THE HELP OF OUR CHUMS ON THE OTHER BANK! DOWN WE GO AGAIN, CONCHO, AND MAKE IT LOOK GOOD!

AAGH!

THEY ARE GOING UNDER - WE HAVE HIT THEM, MI COLONELO!

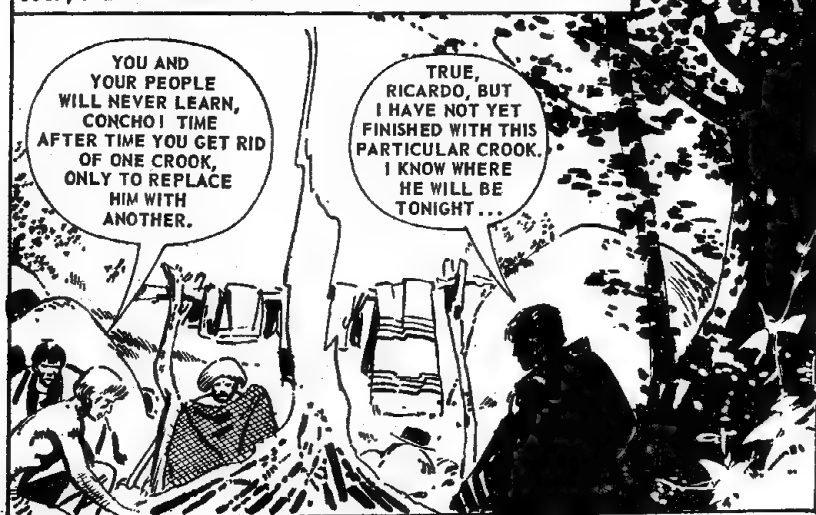
PERHAPS! I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO BE SURE, BUT I THINK IT IS TOO LATE FOR EL CONCHO TO UPSET OUR PLANS NOW. CALL OFF THE MEN!

THE TWO FUGITIVES WERE MORE THAN A MILE DOWNSTREAM BEFORE THEY WERE ABLE TO SCRAMBLE ASHORE TO JOIN THE OTHER BANDITS.

HOLA, CONCHO! IT IS GOOD THAT YOU ARE SAFE!

SI, THE BAD PESO WILL ALWAYS TURN UP - IS IT NOT SO?

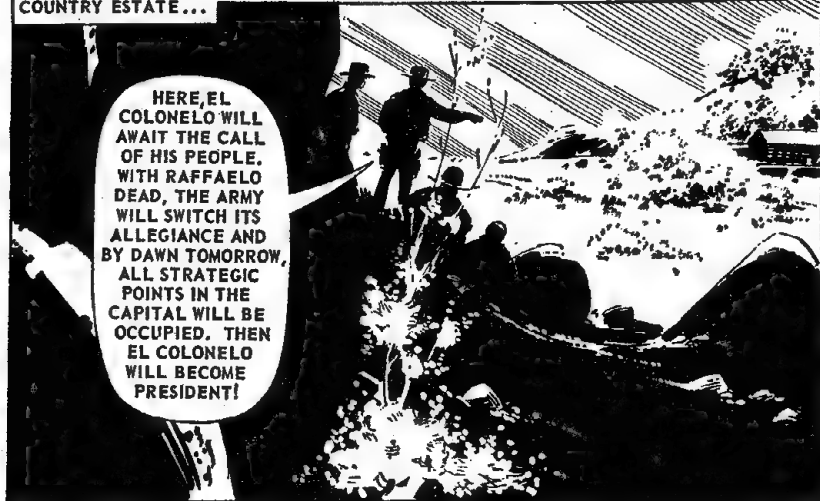
SOON, THEIR CLOTHES WERE DRYING IN FRONT OF A ROARING FIRE.



YOU AND
YOUR PEOPLE
WILL NEVER LEARN,
CONCHO! TIME
AFTER TIME YOU GET RID
OF ONE CROOK,
ONLY TO REPLACE
HIM WITH
ANOTHER.

TRUE,
RICARDO, BUT
I HAVE NOT YET
FINISHED WITH THIS
PARTICULAR CROOK.
I KNOW WHERE
HE WILL BE
TONIGHT...

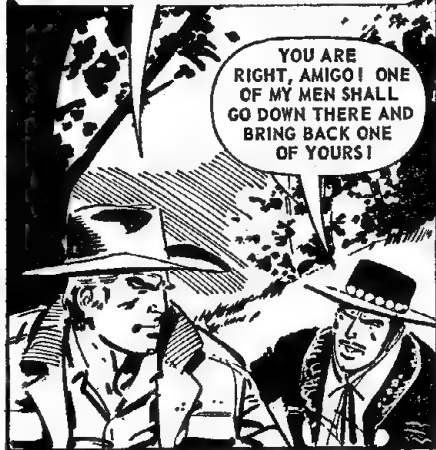
THAT NIGHT, EL CONCHO LED HIS MEN AND RICK FRANCIS TO THE DEAD PRESIDENT'S COUNTRY ESTATE...



HERE, EL
COLONELO WILL
AWAIT THE CALL
OF HIS PEOPLE.
WITH RAFFAELLO
DEAD, THE ARMY
WILL SWITCH ITS
ALLEGIANCE AND
BY DAWN TOMORROW,
ALL STRATEGIC
POINTS IN THE
CAPITAL WILL BE
OCCUPIED. THEN
EL COLONELO
WILL BECOME
PRESIDENT!

WE CAN STILL PUT A SPOKE IN THE COLONEL'S WHEEL! THERE ARE NEARLY A HUNDRED OF MY MEN DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE. IF WE CAN ONLY CONTACT THEM...

YOU ARE RIGHT, AMIGO! ONE OF MY MEN SHALL GO DOWN THERE AND BRING BACK ONE OF YOURS!



TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

LISTEN, THERE'S SOMEONE COMING!



IT IS I, CONCHO!

AND PABLO - IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, HOMBRE!

WE WERE TOLD THAT YOU HAD BEEN KILLED, SEÑOR! SO EL COLONELO HAS LIED IN THIS, AS IN ALL THINGS!



RICK WASTED NO TIME IN GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS.

IF YOU ARE THINKING OF AN ATTACK, SEÑOR, ALL THE MEN FROM THE MINE WILL BE WITH YOU. ALSO MANY OF EL COLONELO'S MEN ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE ATTACK ON EL CONCHO. IT WOULD NOT TAKE MUCH TO TURN THEM AGAINST HIM!

FINE, PABLO! NOW I WANT YOU TO ROUND UP FIFTY MEN YOU CAN TRUST, WITH EVERY GUN YOU CAN LAY YOUR HANDS ON...



AN HOUR LATER...

QUIEN ES?

IT IS I, PABLO! GOOD MAN - I KNEW I COULD RELY ON YOU!



EL COLONELO IS GIVING A BIG CELEBRATION DINNER, SEÑOR, SO HE AND HIS OFFICERS ARE ALL INSIDE THE HOUSE, THERE ARE ONLY TWO PATROLLING SENTRIES.

EL CONCHO AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF THEM. YOU HAVE THE MEN READY TO RUSH THE DOORS AS SOON AS I GIVE THE WORD!



THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE SENTRIES AS RICK CREPT IN ON ONE SIDE OF THE HOUSE
AND EL CONCHO ON THE OTHER...



THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO TAKE A CHANCE. RICK MADE A DASH FOR THE
NEAREST WALL...



... AND JUST REACHED A PATCH OF SHADOW AS A GUARD TURNED THE CORNER.



SCARCELY DARING TO BREATHE, RICK WATCHED THE SENTRY START BACK ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE.



THE UNSUSPECTING SENTRY WENT DOWN
WITHOUT A SOUND...



IT IS
DONE, RICARDO!
AND YOURS?

OUT LIKE A
LIGHT! THERE'S
NOTHING TO
STOP US NOW,
SO WHAT ARE WE
WAITING FOR?



THE MEN RAN FORWARD EAGERLY AT EL CONCHO'S SIGNAL...



THE DOORS WERE MASSIVE — BUT WHEN RICK TRIED THE CATCH...



SILENTLY, THE RAIDERS STORMED INTO THE SUMPTUOUS ENTRANCE HALL OF THE HOUSE.



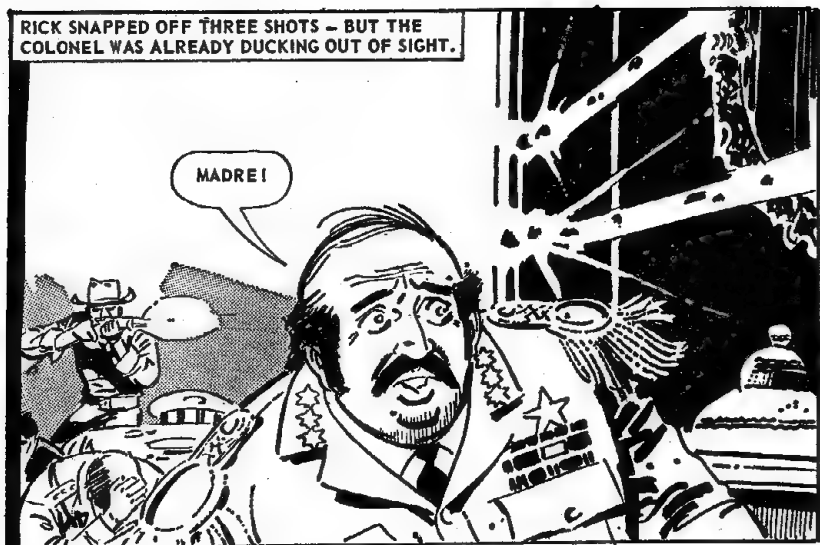
AS THE DOORS BURST OPEN THE COLONEL SPRANG TO HIS FEET, ALMOST BURSTING WITH MINGLED RAGE AND FEAR.

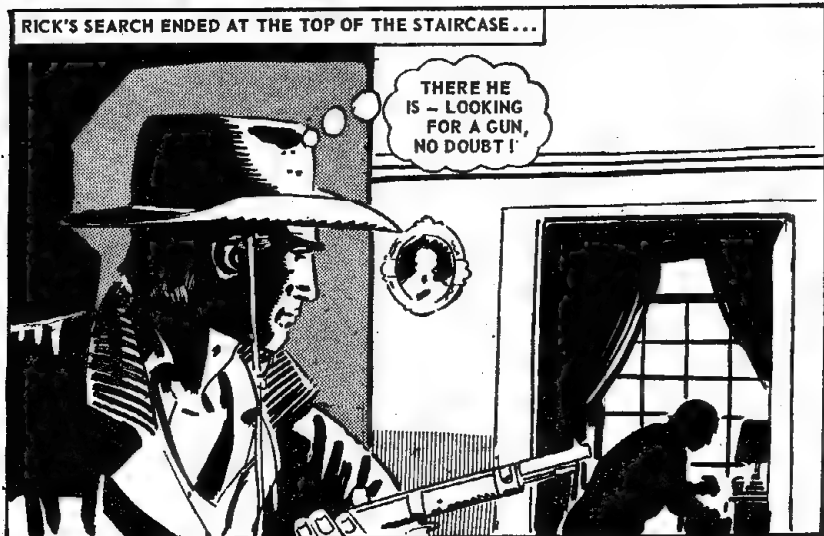


BUT THE COLONEL HAD TOO MUCH AT STAKE TO SURRENDER SO EASILY...



RICK SNAPPED OFF THREE SHOTS - BUT THE COLONEL WAS ALREADY DUCKING OUT OF SIGHT.







RICK MOVED FORWARD TO SEARCH COLONEL MENDOZA - AND FAILED TO NOTICE THE REBEL'S GROPING FINGERS CREEPING TOWARDS THE HILT OF A SWORD HANGING ON THE WALL ABOVE HIS HEAD.



DOWN CAME THE SWORD IN A LIGHTNING SLASH – AND RICK'S GUN WAS DASHED FROM HIS HAND.

AAGH –
YOU TREACHEROUS
RAT!

NOW,
GRINGO –
IT IS MY
TURN!

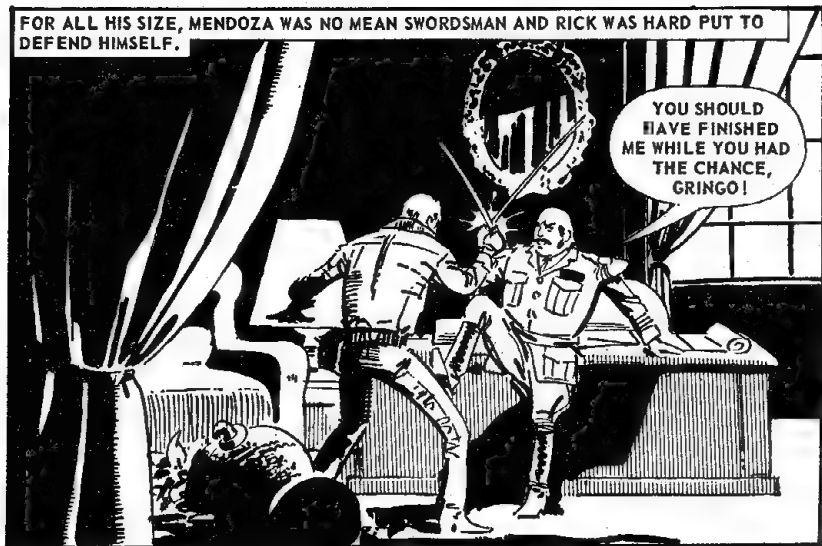
EL COLONELO LUNGED WILDLY BUT RICK SWAYED ASIDE – AND CHOPPED HIS HAND DOWN ON HIS ATTACKER'S FAT NECK.

NOT
SO EASY,
COLONEL!

AIEE!



FOR ALL HIS SIZE, MENDOZA WAS NO MEAN SWORDSMAN AND RICK WAS HARD PUT TO DEFEND HIMSELF.



NOT ONLY THAT, BUT EL COLONELO HAD NO SCRUPLES ABOUT THE SORT OF TACTICS HE USED ...



THE COLONEL WAS OUT OF THE DOOR BEFORE RICK COULD RECOVER.



PHEW -
THAT HURT!
CONCHO DID WARN
ME ABOUT THAT
SNAKE!



RICK STUMBLED OUT OF THE ROOM, BREATHING HARD...

HE'LL
HAVE MADE
FOR THE MAIN
STAIRCASE - IT'S
THE ONLY WAY
OUT!



BUT BY THE TIME THE COLONEL REACHED THE MAIN STAIRCASE, THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY HOPE OF ESCAPE.

LEAVE HIM, CONCHO - HE'S MINE!



THE COLONEL TURNED, SAVAGELY DETERMINED TO WREAK HIS VENGEANCE ON THE ENGLISHMAN, IF IT WAS THE LAST THING HE DID.

FIGHT, COLONEL!

THAT I WILL, GRINGO - YOU WILL DIE REGRETTING THAT YOU EVER TANGLED WITH EL COLONELO!



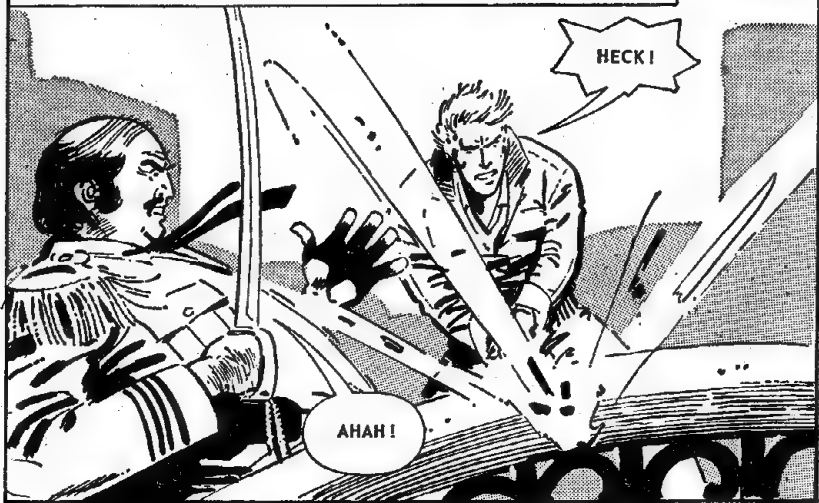
IT WAS THRUST AND PARRY, LUNGE AND SLASH, WITH NEITHER MAN ABLE TO ACHIEVE COMPLETE MASTERY OVER THE OTHER.



BUT THE COLONEL'S REFLEXES WERE SURPRISINGLY FAST ...



RICK HAD PUT TOO MUCH INTO THE BLOW TO BE ABLE TO DRAW BACK ...



HIS BLADE SHATTERED, RICK FRANCIS
WAS AT THE COLONEL'S MERCY ...



NOW,
GRINGO -
IF I AM TO
DIE, AT LEAST
I WILL TAKE
YOU WITH
ME!

NO, NO,
CONCHO, DO NOT
SHOOT ...!



VERY WELL,
RICARDO - IF IT IS
YOUR WISH!

AIEE!
THE INGLÉS IS
DOOMED!

AND THEN RICK SHOT FORWARD LIKE AN UNCOILED SPRING. HIS FIST TOOK EL COLONELO ON THE POINT OF THE JAW ...



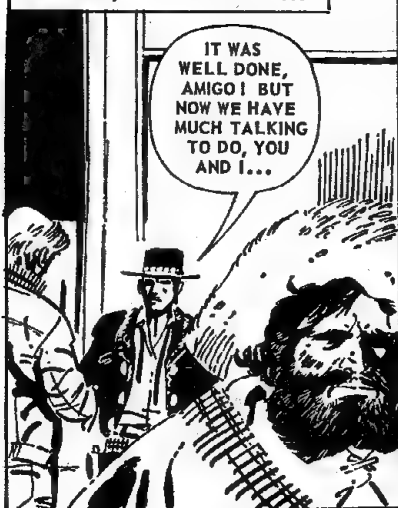
MENDOZA'S BODY CRASHED BACK DOWN THE STAIRS. IT TUMBLED TO THE BOTTOM - AND LAY THERE, MOTIONLESS.

HIS NECK IS BROKEN! YOUR LEADER IS DEAD! GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE ALL UNDER MY ORDERS. NOW GO AND TELL THE NEWS TO YOUR MEN AND SAY THAT I WILL ADDRESS THEM LATER.

WE WILL SEE THAT THEY DO NOT TRY ANY TRICKS, CONCHITO!



SUDDENLY, IT WAS ALL OVER...



BUT THEY HAD SCARCELY SAT DOWN, WHEN...



PABLO LED THEM TO THE CELLARS BENEATH THE HOUSE.

THE COLONEL'S MEN HAVE LEANED OVER BACKWARDS TO CO-OPERATE, CONCHO. THEY COULD HARDLY WAIT TO REVEAL ALL HIS SECRETS. BUT I THOUGHT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE HERE WHEN THIS ONE WAS UNVEILED ...!



THE CELLAR DOOR SWUNG OPEN – TO REVEAL A SCENE STRAIGHT OUT OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS!



IT IS THE
PRESIDENT'S TREASURE-
HOUSE! I HAD HEARD
IT EXISTED,
BUT?

THE FRUITS OF
TWENTY YEARS OF
CORRUPTION AND MIS-
GOVERNMENT, CONCHO!
THE CONTENTS OF THIS
VAULT MUST BE WORTH
MILLIONS – BILLIONS,
EVEN!

THE DISCOVERY OF SUCH VAST
WEALTH HAD MADE EL CONCHO
STRANGELY SERIOUS.

TELL ME,
RICARDO,
WHAT WOULD
YOU, AN
ENGINEER, DO
WITH SO MUCH
MONEY?

I'D BUILD ROADS,
RAILWAYS, BRIDGES,
RESERVOIRS, AIRPORTS!
BRING THIS COUNTRY
RIGHT UP TO DATE
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
ALL ITS PEOPLE!



BUT
SUCH A
PROGRAMME
COULD
ONLY BE
INITIATED
BY THE
PRESIDENT
HIMSELF!

SO BE IT, AMIGO! THERE
HAS BEEN A REVOLUTION.
AND THE PEOPLE WILL BE
WAITING TO WELCOME
THEIR NEW LEADER. IT
WOULD BE A PITY TO
DISAPPOINT THEM?





MURDER RAP

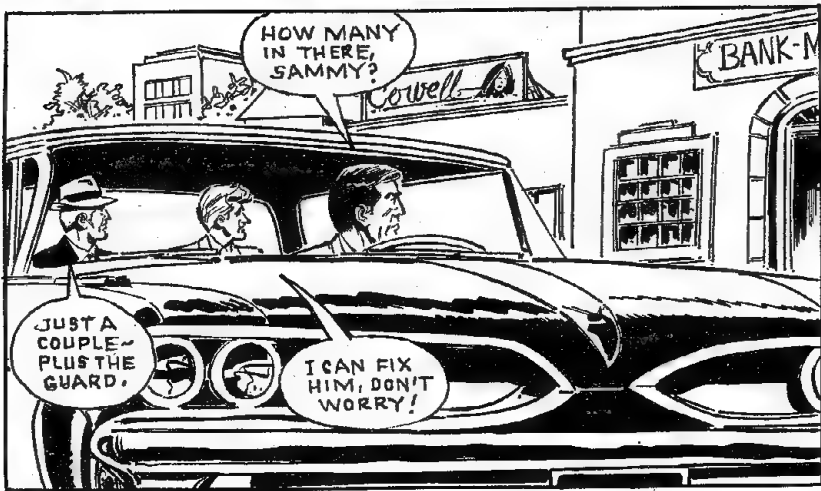
THE LIMOUSINE DRIFTED QUIETLY
DOWN THE MAIN STREET OF THE
SMALL AMERICAN MID-WEST TOWN...

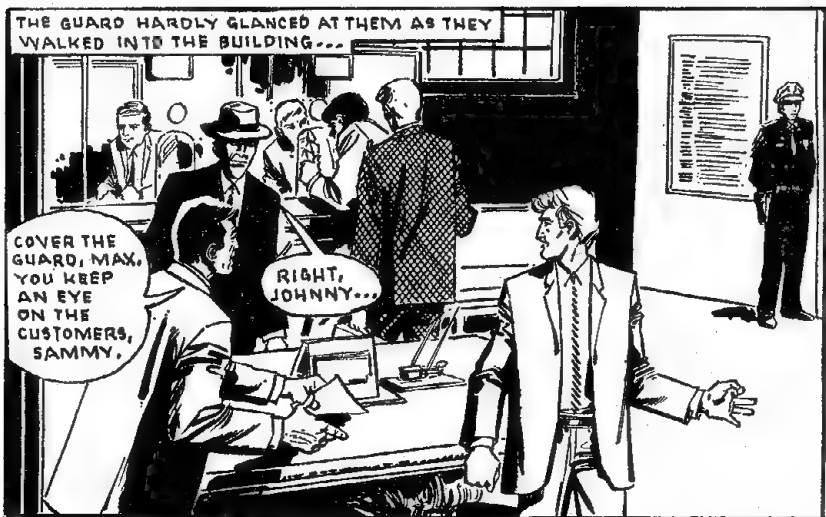


HOW MANY
IN THERE,
SAMMY?

JUST A
COUPLE~
PLUS THE
GUARD.

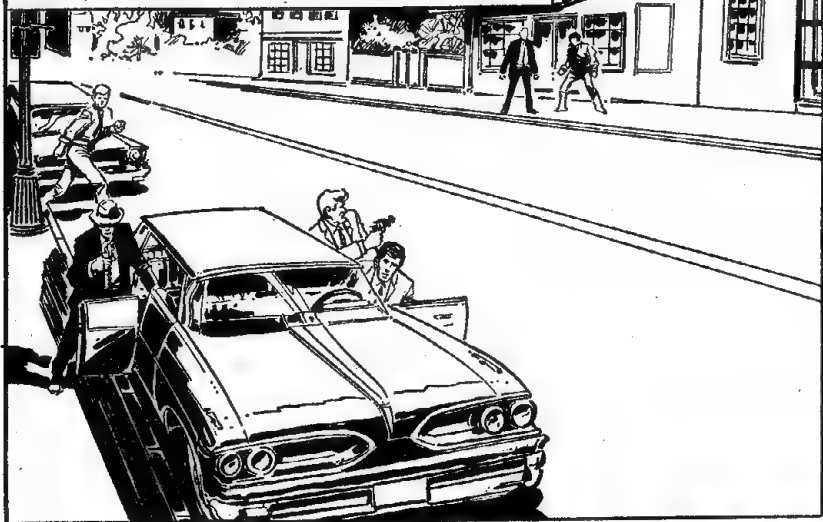
I CAN FIX
HIM, DON'T
WORRY!







THEY BACKED OUT OF THE BANK AND INTO THE STREET, FIVE SECONDS LATER, THEY WERE LEAPING INTO THE CAR...



THE PATROL MAN HAD BEEN IN THE FORCE LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW TROUBLE WHEN HE FOUND IT. HE TURNED THE BIKE...

HE'S COMING AFTER US!

DON'T WORRY!
THIS HEAP'LL
LEAVE HIM
WELL BEHIND!

MAX COULD FEEL THE COLD SWEAT ON HIS FOREHEAD.

WE'RE NOT LOSIN' HIM, JOHNNY!
HE'S STILL RIGHT BEHIND!

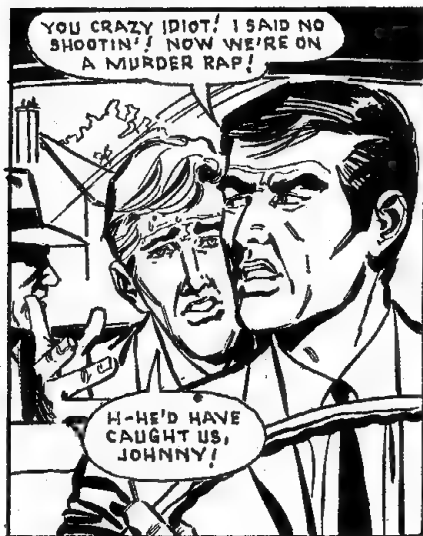
YOU WAIT TILL WE HIT THE DESERT ROAD!

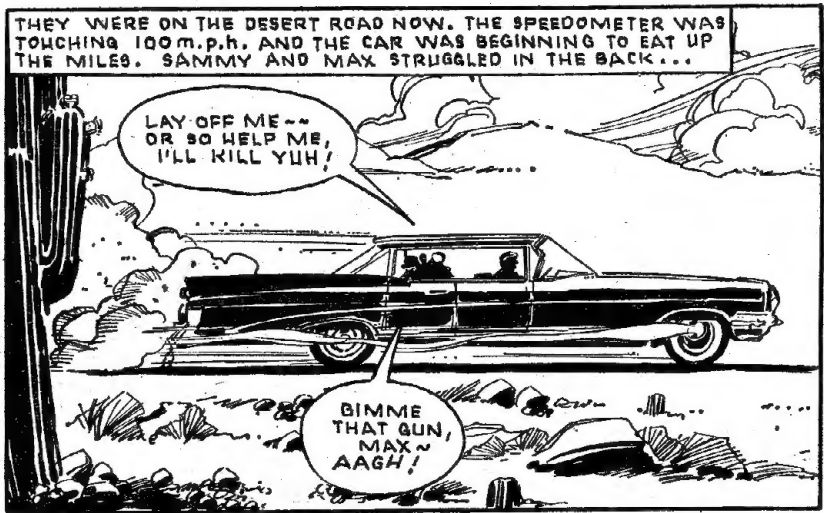
BUT MAX COULD NOT WAIT, BEFORE THE OTHERS COULD STOP HIM, HE LEVELLED HIS GUN OUT THE WINDOW...

DON'T BE A FOOL!

I'LL MAKE SURE HE DON'T CATCH US!







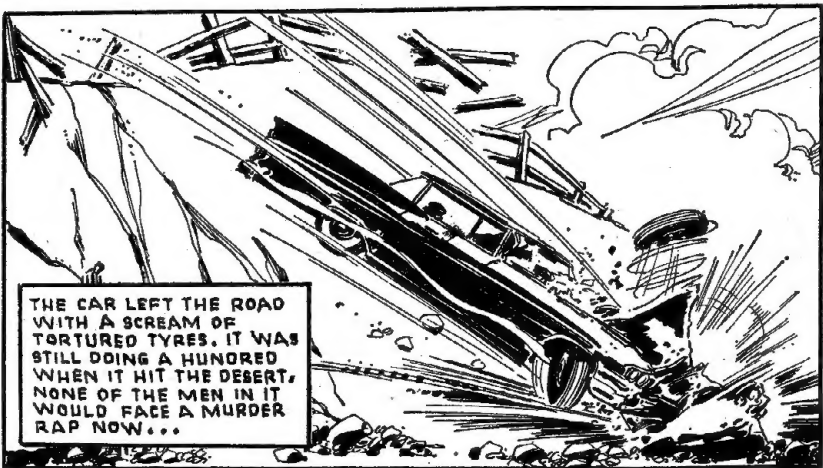
A MUFFLED SHOT - AND SAMMY
SLUMPED BACK IN THE SEAT.



THE SECOND SHOT WAS ALMOST
DROWNED BY THE CAR'S
POWERFUL ROAR. JOHNNY FELL
FORWARD ACROSS THE WHEEL...



THE CAR LEFT THE ROAD
WITH A SCREAM OF
TORTURED TYRES. IT WAS
STILL DOING A HUNDRED
WHEN IT HIT THE DESERT.
NONE OF THE MEN IN IT
WOULD FACE A MURDER
RAP NOW...



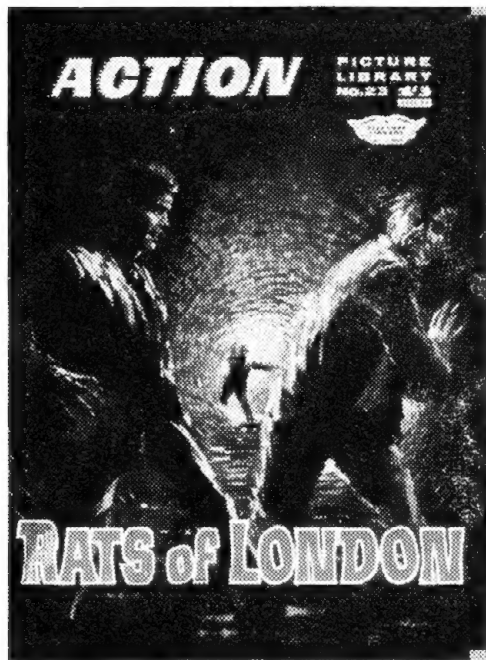
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